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## MODEL HOMES FOR WORKING GIRLS

By MARY E. THORNTON, R.N.

THE Tenements Committee of the Woman's Municipal League of New York has for a part of its program for the coming year a demonstration of how two working women can make a complete home in a two-room flat at a weekly rental of \$2.65.

One of the members of the committee, Miss Gertrude Barnum, has fitted up such a flat at 416 East 65th Street, where she is "at home" to visitors every Thursday afternoon and evening. One Thursday, the writer was among those who enjoyed her hospitality.

The decorations of the model tenements are in marked contrast to the tawdry embellishments of the ordinary flimsy apartment buildings, whose art some one has described as a cross between early Pullman and late North German Lloyd. The exterior of the model dwellings is of simple, substantial character, brick, with stone entrances and trimmings, and all rooms have windows which open either upon the wide, well-kept streets, or on large, light, immaculate courtyards.

On passing the threshold of the building one finds her dream of marble halls coming true, for the common hallways are built of materials upon which you could turn a hose, and it is evident that the superintendents do not economize on soap and water. The tasteful dark green and buff Bostonesque walls are shining clean and the pretty stone floors and stairways are a constant reminder of the big "wipe your feet" mats at the entrances. No one would think of stepping upon such a floor without wiping her feet, and there beginneth the first lesson.

It is surprisingly still in the buildings, as all partitions between dwellings are deadened; and it is so light that one does not grope and stumble as in most apartment houses. Nothing is in the passages to stumble upon; in fact, the only evidences that the residents use pails and bottles or have garbage and rubbish to throw away are the significant green doors of the dumb-waiters on each landing. Garbage is disposed of so immediately and completely as to leave no odors behind, and plumbing is of such quality that sewer gas is unknown. All lavatories are private—one inside of each separate flat.

When we come to flat forty-two, the electric buzzer works and the door opens promptly into a small private hallway with a shelf and coat-hangers at one end, for hats and wraps. The "study" is the first room, and a bright hospitable appearance it presents; woodwork, with black

Flemish oak finish; walls, buff; buff and red window curtains and hangings, and a nice, plain, built-in piece of furniture which looks like a book-case—but there comes a surprise! The book-case proves to be a china closet, full of fetching, talkative, red and white cups and saucers, pitchers, bowls, etc., all bought at a neighboring “3, 9, and 19 cent store.” Behind a black Japanese screen is hidden a gas range. Behind a tall, green screen is discovered a white enamelled kitchen sink and white porcelain wash-tubs. And you sit down in astonishment with a realization that you have been completely fooled by the desk and desk chair, the little round black oak centre table with its brass lamp and magazines, the large black wicker cushioned arm-chair, etc. This room isn’t a study! It’s a tenement kitchen!

Next, one is permitted to peer into the closets, with their strong clothes-hooks and good wide shelves and hat cupboards; and to examine the quarter gas meter and the “A Number 1” plumbing in the lavatory (which has a window opening to the court). Then comes the “drawing-room.”

It is at this juncture that you decide to give notice to your landlady, abandon your hall bedroom at the boarding-house, and have a drawing-room all your own. Such a cosy couch and pillows and perfect-lady window curtains! A window box with bright geraniums, dears of rugs and rockers and settees; and another closet! Listen. When you open that closet door you know that you have been fooled again. Lingerie, it contains, kimonos, and slippers. Yes, fooled again! The drawing-room is another fake. It’s a bedroom under its cloaks. The settee opens to reveal spick-and-span shirtwaists. The couch cover comes off to reveal a white bed-spread and hemstitched pillow slips. The chest of drawers unfolds at the top and becomes a bureau with drawers full of combs, brushes, face powder, nail files, and what-nots.

So you rush off to your own address as fast as ever you can get there, pack up, and say farewell forever to the long-faced, rickety furniture, and wheezy gas jets of your top-floor-rear bedroom. And you wonder and wonder why you have ever stood them all these years, and breathe a prayer of thanksgiving to the Woman’s Municipal League Tenements Committee whose “sphere” most truly is “the home.”

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NEW ZEALAND’S national association is formed by the amalgamation of four local groups, with Miss Maclean, the assistant inspector of hospitals, as president.